

What is claimed is:

CLAIMS

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1. A computerized interactor system comprising:

a detection space;

10 at least one physical interactor which can be manually placed within said detection space and removed from said detection space;

an interface responsive to an interactor in said detection space and operative to provide an interactor signal indicative of the identity and status of said interactor; and

15 a computer system coupled to said interface and operative to process said interactor signal to create a control input that is indicative of said identity and status of said object within a predetermined semantic framework.

20 2. A computerized interactor system as recited in claim 1 further comprising an application system coupled to said computer system and responsive to said control input.

25 3. A computerized interactor system as recited in claim 1 comprising a plurality of interactors which may be manually put into and removed from said detection space and wherein said detection space comprises a plurality of positions at which respective ones of said plurality of interactors may be selectively manually placed and removed thereby to

provide a plurality of selectable and changeable arrangements of said plurality of interactors at said plurality of positions of said detection space.

- 5 4. A computerized interactor system as recited in claim 3 wherein said plurality of interactors may be manually placed in and removed from said detection space by a plurality of users of the system.

- 10 5. A computerized interactor system as recited in claim 1 wherein said interactor comprises identification circuitry and wherein said detection space comprises internal circuitry adapted for connection with said identification circuitry of said interactor, said internal circuitry of said detection space being coupled to said interface.

- 15 6. A computerized interactor system as recited in claim 5 wherein said detection space comprises a plurality of positions at which said interactor may be selectively manually removably placed in order to at least temporarily connect said identification circuitry of said interactor with said internal circuitry of said detection space.

- 20 7. A computerized interactor system as recited in claim 6 wherein said detection space comprises at least one channel having a slanted surface for supporting said interactor and wherein the interactor system comprises magnet elements for biasing said interactor into a selected position.

- 25 8. A computerized interactor system as recited in claim 1 wherein said at least one physical interactor comprises a distinct visual feature for metaphorically representing said identity of said interactor.

9. A computerized interactor system as recited in claim 2 wherein said application system comprises an audio application system means for providing audio sounds dependent upon interactors placed in said detection space.

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10. A computerized interactor system as recited in claim 2 comprising a network of workstations each accessed to said detection space so that a user at a workstation may manually place within and remove from said detection space at least one said interactor, and wherein said
10 application system comprises an audio application system, said audio application system comprising for each one of said workstations a microphone means and a speaker means for audio communication between said workstations, said audio application system being responsive to said
15 control input from said computer system to provide audio sounds having volume and directional characteristics which are a function of interactors selectively placed in said detection space.

11. A computerized interactor system as recited in claim 2 wherein said application system comprises a videotape application system
20 means for marking events in a videotape.

12. A computerized interactor system as recited in claim 2 wherein said application system comprises a video system including a screen for displaying a video source for viewing by at least one user, said
25 computer system being adapted for retrieving timing information from said video system in relation to said interactor signal.

13. A computerized interactor system as recited in claim 1 wherein said interface is operative to detect a position of said interactor
30 placed in said detection space and a time period of when said interactor has been placed in said detection space thereby to provide said interactor signal indicative of said status of said interactor.

14. A method for controlling a computerized system comprising the steps of:

- a) providing a detection space;
- 5 b) placing a physical and identifiable member having a semantic meaning independent of said member within said detection space;
- c) determining said semantic meaning of said member within a given semantic context; and
- 10 d) controlling a computerized system in response to said semantic meaning of said identifiable number.

15. A method for controlling a computerized system as recited in claim 14 wherein said step of determining said semantic meaning of said member comprises determining a selected position of said member in said detection space.

16. A method for controlling a computerized system as recited in claim 14 wherein said step of determining said semantic meaning of said member comprises determining an identification of said member.

17. A method for controlling a computerized system as recited in claim 14 wherein said step of determining said semantic meaning of said member comprises determining a temporal relationship of said member placed in said detection space.

18. A method for controlling a computerized system as recited in claim 14 wherein said step of determining said semantic meaning of said member comprises: determining a selected position of said member in said detection space; determining an identification of said member; and

determining a temporal relationship of said member placed in said detection space.

19. A method for controlling a computerized system as recited in claim 14 comprising placing a plurality of physical and identifiable members within said detection space and determining the semantic meanings of said plurality of members.

20. A method for controlling a computerized system as recited in claim 14 further comprising the step of providing a network of coupled workstations each having access to said detection space such that a user may place at least one said member within said detection space.

21. A method for controlling a computerized system as recited in claim 14 wherein said step of controlling a computerized system comprises creating a control input indicative of said semantic meaning of said member, and wherein the method further comprises the steps of providing an application system coupled to said computerized system and controlling said application system by means of said control input.

22. A method for controlling a computerized system as recited in claim 21 wherein said application system is a videotape application system means for marking events in a videotape.

23. A method for controlling a computerized system as recited in claim 21 wherein said application system is an audio application system means for providing audio sounds dependent upon a plurality of members placed in said detection space.

24. A system for controlling a computerized system comprising:

at least one physical control member having an identifiable identity;

a field receptive to said control member;

an interface coupled to said field and operative to develop an identity signal representative of said identity of said control member; and

- 5 a processor coupled to said interface and receptive to said identity signal, said processor processing said identity signal to develop a control signal for a system to be controlled.

- 10 25. A system for controlling a computerized system as recited in claim 24 wherein said interface is operative to detect a status of said member received by said field and to develop a status signal representative of said status of said member.

- 15 26. A system for controlling a computerized system as recited in claim 25 wherein said status of said member is a function of a position of said member received by said field and of a time said member is received by said field.

- 20 27. A system for controlling a computerized system as recited in claim 24 wherein said system to be controlled is an audio application system means for providing audio sounds dependent upon said control signal.

- 25 28. A system for controlling a computerized system as recited in claim 24 comprising a network of workstations each accessed to said field so that a user at a workstation may operate on at least one control member for reception by said field, and wherein said system to be controlled comprises an audio application system, said audio application system comprising for each one of said workstations a microphone means and a
30 speaker means for audio communication between said workstations, said audio application system being responsive to said control signal from said

computer system to provide audio sounds having volume and directional characteristics which are a function of control members selectively operated for reception by said field.

- 5 29. A system for controlling a computerized system as recited in claim 24 wherein said system to be controlled is a videotape application system means for marking events in a videotape.

- 10 30. A system for controlling a computerized system as recited in claim 24 wherein said system to be controlled comprises a video system including a screen for displaying a video source for viewing by at least one user, said computerized system being adapted for retrieving timing information from said video system in relation to said identity signal.

- 15 31. A system for controlling a computerized system as recited in claim 24 comprising a plurality of control members for reception by said field and wherein said field comprises a plurality of positions at which respective ones of said plurality of control members may be selectively manually placed and removed thereby to provide a plurality of selectable and changeable arrangements of said plurality of control members at said plurality of positions of said field.

- 20 32. A system for controlling a computerized system as recited in claim 31 wherein said plurality of control members may be manually placed in and removed from said plurality of positions by a plurality of users of the system.

- 30 33. A system for controlling a computerized system as recited in claim 24 wherein said control member comprises identification circuitry and wherein said field comprises internal circuitry adapted for connection with said identification circuitry of said control member, said internal circuitry of said field being coupled to said interface.

34. A system for controlling a computerized system as recited in claim 33 wherein said field comprises a plurality of positions at which said control member may be selectively manually removably positioned in order to at least temporarily connect said identification circuitry of said control member with said internal circuitry of said field.

35. A system for controlling a computerized system as recited in claim 34 wherein said field comprises at least one channel having a slanted surface for supporting said control member and wherein the system comprises magnet elements for biasing said control member into a selected position.

36. A system for controlling a computerized system as recited in claim 24 wherein said control member comprises at least one distinct visual feature for metaphorically representing said identity of said control member.

37. A method for marking events within a temporal flow comprising the steps of:

- a) monitoring a temporal flow;
- b) providing a detection space;
- c) placing an identifiable member having a semantic meaning within said detection space;
- d) determining said semantic meaning of said member that is different from said member in a context of said temporal flow; and
- e) recording an event related to said temporal flow and to the semantic meaning of said identifiable number.

38. A method for marking events within a temporal flow as recited in claim 37 providing a detection space accessible by a plurality of users.

5 39. A method for marking events within a temporal flow as recited in claim 37 comprising:

placing a plurality of identifiable members within said detection space;

determining the semantic meanings of said plurality of members; and

10 recording a plurality of events related to said temporal flow and to the semantic meanings of said plurality of members.

40. A method for marking events within a temporal flow as recited in claim 37 wherein said step of determining said semantic meaning
15 of said member comprises determining a selected position of said member placed in said detection space.

41. A method for marking events within a temporal flow as recited in claim 37 wherein said step of determining said semantic meaning
20 of said member comprises determining an identification of said member.

42. A method for marking events within a temporal flow as recited in claim 37 wherein said step of determining said semantic meaning
25 of said member comprises determining a temporal relationship of said member placed in said detection space.

43. A method for marking events within a temporal flow as recited in claim 37 wherein said step of determining said semantic meaning of said member comprises:

determining a selected position of said member placed in said detection space;

determining an identification of said member placed in said detection space; and

5 determining a temporal relationship of said member placed in said detection space.

44. A system for marking events occurring in a recorded media comprising:

10 a display system for displaying a recording, said system providing an event timing information concerning events occurring in said recording;

a plurality of event markers, each of which is provided with an event marker identifier;

15 an event field receptive to said event markers and operative to provide said event marker identifier in an event marker time; and

a processor coupled to said display system to receive said event timing information and said event marker identifier, and operative to mark an event based upon said event timing information, said event marker time, and said event marker identifier.

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45. A system for marking events occurring in a recorded media as recited in claim 44 wherein said plurality of event markers are operable by a plurality of users for making said plurality of event markers removably received by said event field.

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46. A system for marking events occurring in a recorded media as recited in claim 44 wherein said plurality of event markers each comprise at least one distinct visual feature for metaphorically representing said event marker identifier.

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47. A system for marking events occurring in a recorded media as recited in claim 44 wherein said plurality of event markers each comprising identification circuitry and wherein said event field comprises internal circuitry adapted for connection with said identification circuitry
5 of said plurality of event markers.

48. A system for marking events occurring in a recorded media as recited in claim 47 wherein said event field comprises a plurality of positions at which said event markers may be selectively manually
10 removably placed in order to at least temporarily connect said identification circuitry of said event markers with said internal circuitry of said event field.